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The M-9, with Uncle Walter at the left of the rotors

TRIVIA QUESTION: Who was “Uncle Walter” and why can he be found hanging around the National Cryptologic Museum?

TRIVIA ANSWER: During World War II, the British and American cryptologic organizations exploited German messages enciphered on the ENIGMA machine. A machine called a *bombe* -- the U.S. version was built at National Cash Register in

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Dayton, Ohio -- analyzed the German message to determine the key setting for the ENIGMA. Usually, a *bombe* run produced two or three possible settings.

The *bombe* operator would then take the printout of the possible settings to a device with ENIGMA rotors and a reflector that emulated those on the original ENIGMA. She would run a test on the machine to see which of the possible settings produced a real German word.

This device, designated by the Americans as an M-9, also was manufactured by National Cash Register.

The German ENIGMA reflector was officially named the *Umkehrwalze D*. However, non-German speakers in the U.S. cryptologic services called it the "Uncle Walter."

The photograph shows the M-9 which is on display at the National Cryptologic Museum, complete with an Uncle Walter. The museum is open every federal workday from 0900 to 1600, and the first and third Saturdays of every month from 1000 to 1400. Take your family to visit Uncle Walter.

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